

## **JUVENILE COURT'S OTHER FUNCTIONS**

### **CHILD REQUIRING ASSISTANCE (C.R.A.)**

A parent, legal guardian, or custodian with custody of the child may file an application stating that the child is:

**A Runaway** (age 6-18) who repeatedly runs away from the home of the parent, legal guardian, or custodian;

**A Stubborn** child (age 6-18) who fails to obey the lawful and reasonable commands of the parent, legal guardian, or custodian which interferes with his or her ability to care for the child;

A person who represents the school district where your child attends can file an application stating that your child is a:

**Habitual Truant** (age 6-16) who fails to attend school for more than 8 days in a quarter without a proper excuse;

**Habitual School Offender** (age 6-16) who fails to obey the lawful and reasonable commands of the school;

The parent will meet with the Clerk Magistrate or his designee. The Clerk will determine if any community based services are available and if so, refer family to such services prior to accepting application. If family has already attempted community based services, Clerk will accept application and set for preliminary hearing within 7 days. A preliminary hearing judge shall decide whether case will go to fact finding or informal.

For more information in the Child Requiring Assistance please click on following link:

<http://www.mass.gov/courts/docs/courts-and-judges/courts/juvenile-court/child-requiring-assistance-parent-handout.pdf>

## **CARE AND PROTECTIONS**

The Juvenile Court also has jurisdiction over cases involving abuse or neglect of a child under eighteen years old. Care and Protection proceedings start with a report of abuse or neglect.

Mandated Reporters, such as teachers, doctors, guidance counselors, social workers, and police officers\* who are acting in their professional capacity must report cases of child abuse and neglect to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Other people with knowledge may report this information to DCF, although they are not mandated by law to do so.

If the case is screened in by DCF, a caseworker will conduct a 10-day investigation of the allegation. If DCF supports the allegation, a caseworker will work with the family to address the problems or they may proceed in Juvenile Court for temporary custody. If it is determined it is an emergency situation, DCF can petition the Juvenile Court to receive immediate custody, thus removing the child from the home. This hearing must occur within seventy-two hours of the removal. All parties, including the child, both parents, and DCF are represented by counsel. The Juvenile Court also presides over a final determination hearing, deciding whether the DCF will gain permanent custody.

\*These are only a few examples of mandated reporters. See Mass. Gen Laws Ch. 119, Sec 51A <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXVII/Chapter119/Section51a> or contact DCF.